

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 HONG K 02882 01 OF 02 240521 Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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P 240445 Z MAR 73

FM AMKLNSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6404

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 2882

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER PROCEDURES OF FOREIGN
MISSION IN PEKING

REF: HK 2824

1. IN PREPARING REFTTEL, WE PULLED TOGETHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER PROCEDURES OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS
IN PEKING, SOME OF WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST AND USE. OUR
INFORMATION, OF COURSE, IS SECOND HAND.

2. HONEYMOON PERIOD

A NEWLY ARRIVED FOREIGN MISSION HAS A HONEYMOON PERIOD OF ONE OR
TWO MONTHS DURING WHICH IT RECEIVES PRIORITY ATTENTION FROM THE
DIPLOMATIC SERVICE BUREAU (DSB) OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. WITHIN
THE LIMITS OF AVAILABILITIES AND CAPABILITIES, THE CHINESE ARE FORTH-
COMING ON REQUESTS FOR FACILITIES AND SERVICES AT THIS TIME. WHEN
THE HONEYMOON PERIOD IS OVER THE DSB TURNS TO THE REQUESTS OF
OTHER MISSIONS AND IS MARKEDLY LESS CONCERNED TO PLEASE.
THEREFORE, MISSION NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE CARE-
FULLY AND DETAILEDLY THOUGHT OUT IN ADVANCE AND ENERGETICALLY
PUSHED IN THIS INITIAL PERIOD.

3. QUARTERS

THE DSB' S PRACTICE IS TO SHOW A NEW MISSION SELECTED QUARTERS
THAT ARE AVILABLE AND TO OFFER AN IMMEDIATE CONTRACT. IF THE
SELECTED QUARTERS ARE REJECTED, THE MISSION GOES TO THE BOTTOM OF
THE WAITING LIST. CHANCERY LAYOUTS TEND TOWARD TOO FEW OFFICES AND
OUTSIZED PUBLIC ROOMS, AMBASSADORIAL QUARTERS, AND KITCHENS.

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PAGE 02 HONG K 02882 01 OF 02 240521 Z

THE DSB IS AMENABLE TO ALTERATIONS, BUT BUILDING MATERIALS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY WITH A WAITING LIST, AND WORK PROCEEDS VERY SLOWLY. THE DSB WOULD PERMIT A MISSION TO BRING IN TECHNICIANS AND WORKERS WHO ARE ITS OWN NATIONALS, BUT IS KNOWN TO HAVE TURNED DOWN CHINESE TECHNICIANS FROM HONG KONG.

4. MISSIONS PREFER TO BRING IN THEIR OWN FURNISHINGS FOR OFFICES AND QUARTERS. THE CANADIANS HAVE FULLY EQUIPPED LIVING QUARTERS (E. G. SHEETS, TABLEWARE, APPLIANCES, STERO SETS) BECAUSE DELAYS IN SHIPMENT OF PERSONAL EFFECTS PROVED COSTLY AND INCONVENIENT. APARTMENTS DO NOT HAVE CLOSETS.

5. IT IS POSSIBLE TO LEASE LAND AND BUILD MISSION QUARTERS. THE SWEDES HAVE DONE SO AND ARE THOUGHT TO BE THE BETTER OFF AS A RESULT BOTH IN THE ADEQUACY AND THE APPEARANCE OF THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS. THE NORWEGIANS ARE PRESENTLY PREPARING TO BUILD.

6. NO WAREHOUSES
LEASED STORAGE FACILITIES ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN PEKING. MISSIONS MUST CONSIDER THEIR NEEDS FOR STORAGE SPACE IN SELECTING THEIR MISSION QUARTERS.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

TELEX FACILITIES AND DIRECT WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO MOST MISSIONS. THE CANADIANS USE THE RCA SATELLITE STATION IN SHANGHAI. THE TELEPHONE SYSTEM IS CREAKY, WITH FREQUENT BREAKDOWNS. SOME MISSIONS, SUCH AS THE AUSTRALIAN, BRING IN THEIR OWN HANDSETS AND HAVE OR ARE SETTING UP THEIR OWN PABX, BUT MAINTENANCE IS A FORESEEABLE PROBLEM. THE GERMANS HAVE BEEN USING CHINESE TELEPHONES TEMPORARILY BUT ARE BRINGING IN GERMAN MADE EQUIPMENT. DIPLOMATIC POUCHES ARE USED FOR PERSONAL MAIL, BUT USE IS ALSO MADE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MAILS, WHICH LIMIT PARCELS TO 20 POUNDS MAXIMUM. INTERNATIONAL AIRMAIL TAKES ABOUT ONE WEEK TO EUROPE. NO OPENING OF MAIL OR PILFERING IS REPORTED.

8. EQUIPMENT

CURRENT IS 220-240 WITH SOME REPORTS OF FLUCTUATION. HEAVY USE OF POWER WOULD PROBABLY OVERLOAD A BUILDING'S SYSTEM AS NORMALLY INSTALLED. AUXILIARY GENERATORS ARE UNCOMMON, IF ANY MISSIONS HAVE THEM AT ALL. AIR CONDITIONING IS CONSIDERED NECESSARY
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PAGE 03 HONG K 02882 01 OF 02 240521 Z

FOR FOUR MONTHS OF THE YEAR. CENTRAL HEATING IS PROVIDED AND CONSIDERED ADEQUATE. MAINTENANCE AND VERY LIMITED REPAIR SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FOR EQUIPMENT BUT IS SLOW; E. G. TWO WEEKS FOR TYPE-

WRITER REPAIR. THERE IS ONE GARAGE IN PEKING CONSIDERED QUESTIONABLY CAPABLE OF DOING BASIC LUBRICATION. THE CANADIANS HAVE THEIR OWN MECHANIC. MISSIONS ARE RELUCTANT TO SHARE THEIR TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES. SIMPLE, LOW COMBUSTION AUTOMOBILES ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED. SO ARE BICYCLES. AUTO INSURANCE IS AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH THE HONG KONG OFFICE OF (COMMUNIST) MING AN INSURANCE COMPANY. DRIVING LICENSES ARE ISSUED ON THE BASIS OF A VALID FOREIGN LICENSE AND A MEDICAL EXAMINATION. SALE OF USED AUTOMOBILES, AND PRESUMABLY OTHER MISSION EQUIPMENT, IS PERMITTED PROVIDED THE BUYER HAS DIPLOMATIC STATUS.

9. TRANSPORTATION

GERMANS AND JAPANESE SAY PRIVATE AUTOS ARE HIGHLY USEFUL, BOTH TO GET AROUND AND POSSIBLY FOR RECREATION. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, MAINLY BUSES, ARE INVARIABLY CROWDED AND NOT ALWAYS CONVENIENT. TAXIS ARE AVAILABLE BUT ONLY BY PREARRANGEMENT AND ARE NOT INEXPENSIVE.

10. SUPPLIES

ONLY CHINESE GOODS AND FOOD ARE AVAILABLE EVEN AT THE SPECIAL STORES FOR FOREIGNERS ONLY. OTHER NEEDS, INCLUDING CLOTHING, MUST BE IMPORTED. HONG KONG IS THE MAJOR SOURCE OF SUPPLY. BULK PURCHASES ARE CONSIGNED TO CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE IN HONG KONG FOR DELIVERY AND MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN AUTHORIZING LETTER FROM THE MISSION'S CONSULATE IN HONG KONG. DELIVERY TAKES THREE TO SIX WEEKS BY SLOW TRAIN, FIVE DAYS BY FAST TRAIN, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER IS VERY EXPENSIVE. DRY CLEANING MUST BE SENT TO HONG KONG. THERE ARE NO FROZEN FOODS AVAILABLE, AND TRAVELERS AND COURIERS OFTEN CARRY COOLERS OF STEAKS FROM HONG KONG. A NUMBER OF MISSIONS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN A POOLING ARRANGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE FOOD SUPPLY BY AIRSHIPMENTS.

1. LOCAL STAFF

THE DSB MAKES AVAILABLE A CHIEF FACTOTUM EXPERIENCED IN SERVING FOREIGN MISSION(OFTEN TAKEN AWAY ON SHORT NOTICE FROM ANOTHER MISSION). HE FUNCTIONS MUCH LIKE THE OLD FASHIONED COMPRADORE. HE RELAYS THE MISSION'S REQUEST TO THE DSB AND OTHER CHINESE OFFICES, ACTS AS A WALKING TELEPHONE DIRECTOR (THERE IS NONE), TRANS-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 HONG K 02882 01 OF 02 240521 Z

LATES, INSTRUCTS THE REST OF THE STAFF, AND ADVISES ON PROCEDURES . ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS CENTER ON HIM AND HE IS OVERLOADED WITH WORK. ONCE THE MISSION IS ESTABLISHED HE MAY BE WITHDRAWN WITH LITTLE WARNING POSSIBLY TO SERVE ANOTHER MISSION. OTHER PROSPECTIVE LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE OFFERED BY THE DSB MUCH AS ARE QUARTERS, ON A TAKE- HIM- OR- DO- WITHOUT- BASIS.

12. THE DSB IS UNWILLING TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS BY ASSIGNING LOCAL EMPLOYEES AS TRAINEES; AN ACCOUNTING CLERK MUST BE TRAINED TO DSB STANDARDS EVEN THOUGH HE WILL HAVE TO BE RETRAINED LATER IN THE MISSION'S OWN ACCOUNTING SYSTEM. LOCAL EMPLOYEES ADHERE RIGIDLY TO A NARROW INTERPRETATION OF THEIR DUTIES; MESSENGERS DO NOT STAMP ENVELOPES, DRIVERS DO NOT HELP WITH LUGGAGE, MAIDS DO NOT WASH COOK'S DISHES. LOCAL EMPLOYEES HAVE LITTLE OR NO ENGLISH LANGUAGE. THE PRC IS VERY SHORT OF INTERPRETERS. MISSION PERSONNEL WHO DO NOT SPEAK MANDARIN MUST CONVEY INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STAFF THROUGH THE CHIEF FACTOTUM. THE SAME LANGUAGE PROBLEM HOLDS, OF COURSE, FOR GETTING ABOUT IN THE CITY. SALARIES FOR LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE PAID TO THE DSB. SOME MISSIONS SEEK A MORE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BY OFFERING A FREE MEAL OR SOME OTHER FRINGE BENEFIT.

NOTE BY OC/ T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/ S- O, MR. VIETS, 3/24/73.

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PAGE 01 HONG K 02882 02 OF 02 240527 Z

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6405

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HONG KONG 2882

EXDIS

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13. MEDICAL SERVICES

THERE IS A FRENCH DOCTOR AND A BRITISH NURSE. CHINESE HOSPITAL FACILITIES ARE DESCRIBED FAVORABLY, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE REPORTEDLY RELUCTANT TO PERFORM MORE THAN APPENDECTOMIES AND BIRTH DELIVERIES FOR FOREIGNERS. MEDICAL EVACUATION IS LIBERALLY USED, INCLUDING DENTAL CASES.

14. HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

THE AUSTRALIANS, WHO ARE STILL IN HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS AFTER TWO MONTHS, ADVISE TAKING TWO LIVING ROOMS AND ONE OFFICE ROOM PER PERSON IN THE HOTEL TO AVOID BOTH INCONVENIENCE AND STRAINED PERSONAL RELATIONS. THE AUSTRALIANS AND CANADIANS CONSIDER HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS DIRTY AND SCRUFFY. EFFORTS ARE MADE TO SEGREGATE HOTEL-STAYERS BY NATIONALITY? CHINESE ARE REQUIRED TO SHOW CAUSE BEFORE BEING ADMITTED. HOTEL ROOMS COST ABOUT SEVEN DOLLARS A NIGHT, PLUS 15 PERCENT HEATING CHARGE IN WINTER.

15. FISCAL OPERATIONS

ALL BANKING ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE WITH THE BANK OF CHINA AND NO SPECIAL EXCHANGE RATE IS OFFERED TO DIPLOMATS. A MISSION MUST ESTABLISH A LETTER OF CREDIT TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT OF LOCAL CURRENCY. THERE

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PAGE 02 HONG K 02882 02 OF 02 240527 Z

ARE TWO TYPES OF ACCOUNTS: A SPECIAL ACCOUNT IN WHICH FOREIGN CURRENCY

CAN BE DEPOSITED, AND RMB, TOO, PROVIDED IT CAN BE PROVEN TO HAVE BEEN

ACQUIRED IN CHINA; AND AN ORDINARY ACCOUNT FOR RMB ONLY, WHICH IS FOR DAILY OPERATING EXPENSES AND WHICH CAN BE FUNDED THROUGH TRANSFERS FROM THE SPECIAL ACCOUNT. INDIVIDUALS USING HONG KONG FOR PURCHASES ALSO MAINTAIN A HONG KONG ACCOUNT.

16. ENTERTAINMENT

LOW MORALE, PARTICULARLY BOREDOM, IS A COMMON COMPLAINT, ESPECIALLY AMONG NON- CHINESE SPEAKERS, WHO MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF FOREIGN MISSION PERSONNEL. SOME MISSIONS SHOW MOVIES AND THERE IS A HEAVY DEMAND FOR SEATS AT SUCH SHOWINGS. THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB APPARENTLY IS EXPENSIVE AND HOLDS LITTLE APPEAL. IT IS DESCRIBED AS BOTH IMPERSONAL AND UNCOMFORTABLE WITH POOR SERVICE FOR MEMBERS. SOME MISSIONS HAVE THEIR OWN SWIMMING POOLS AND OUT- DOOR TENNIS COURTS. BOOKS AND MAGAZINES ARE IN DEMAND. CYCLING IS POPULAR. EVEN CHINA SPECIALISTS ARE UNATTRACTED TO THE CHINESE THEATRE FARE. GOOD SHORT-WAVE RADIOS AND RECORD PLAYERS ARE RECOMMENDED.

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